

WILLINGHAM  
BUCKINGHAM  
LEIALOHA  
PEPOY  
GREEN

112

# FABLES™

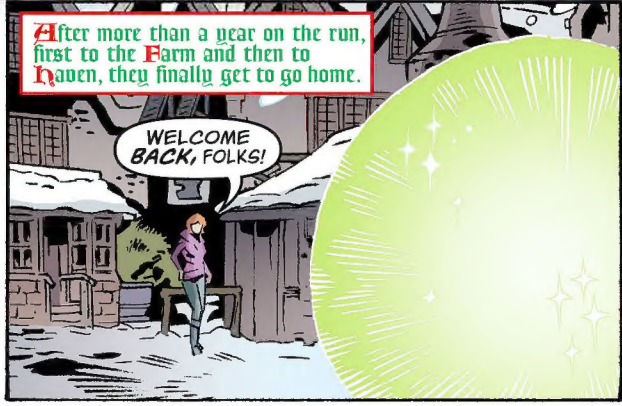


**VERTIGO**

Feb '12  
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# Chapter One – The Chimes





# "All in a Single Night"

In which one of our more intrepid and beloved Fables enjoys a long and very strange Christmas.

OF COURSE THERE'S NO HURRY, YOUR HONOR. YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

GRANTED, THE BAND DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT WITHOUT BOY BLUE, BUT IT'S NOT A *BAD* CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR BEING SO SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT.

I WAS ONLY POINTING OUT THAT THE QUICKER YOU *DO* GET THE CITY FABLES BACK DOWN INTO MANHATTAN, THE SOONER THEY AREN'T SPENDING WINTER IN COLD TENTS.

I AGREE. I INTEND TO START OCCUPYING CASTLE DARK AS SOON AS THE 13TH FLOOR BUNCH ASSURES US THERE ARE NO MORE HIDDEN DANGERS.

FABLETOWN WON'T LOOK THE SAME, BUT IT *WILL* BE REBORN. MARK MY WORDS.

**Bill Willingham** Mark Buckingham  
writer/creator penciller  
**Steve Leialoha** Andrew Pepoy Dan Green  
inker pp. 1-3, inker pp. 4-5, 9-10, inker  
6-8, 11-12, 28-29 13-21, 30 pp. 22-27  
**Lee** Todd Toao Gregory Shelly  
Loughridge Klein Ruas Lockard Bond  
colors letters cover asst. ed. editor





December 23rd...

WOW. SHE DID IT. SHE GOT US ALL HOME IN AN INSTANT.

IN TIME FOR A FAMILY CHRISTMAS. SHE SAID SHE COULD, AND SHE DID. MY LOVELY DAUGHTER.

I COULDA DONE IT QUICKER, I BET.

BET NOT.

THIS IS YOUR DWELLING LAND? IT SEEMS SMALL.

IT IS. IT'S A TERRIBLY SMALL WORLD.

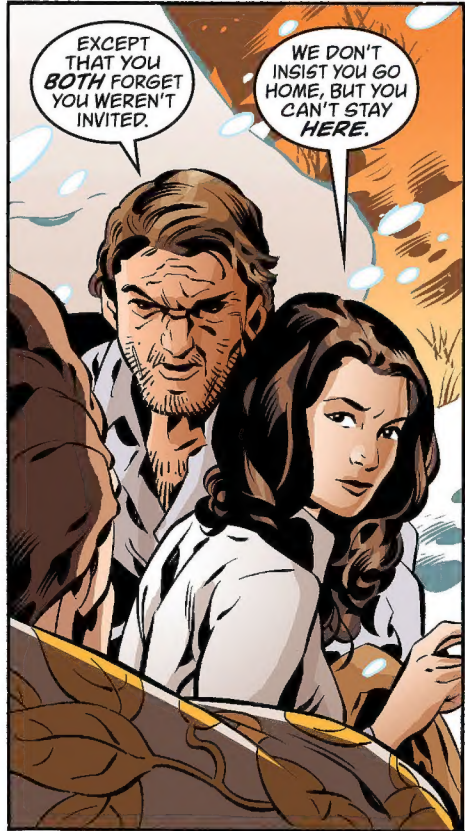
OKAY, SHE PROVED SHE CAN GET US ALL SAFELY HOME AND BACK AGAIN.

WHICH MEANS NORTH WIND SCHOOL'S OUT FOR CHRISTMAS BREAK.

WE'LL START UP AGAIN AFTER THE NEW YEAR.







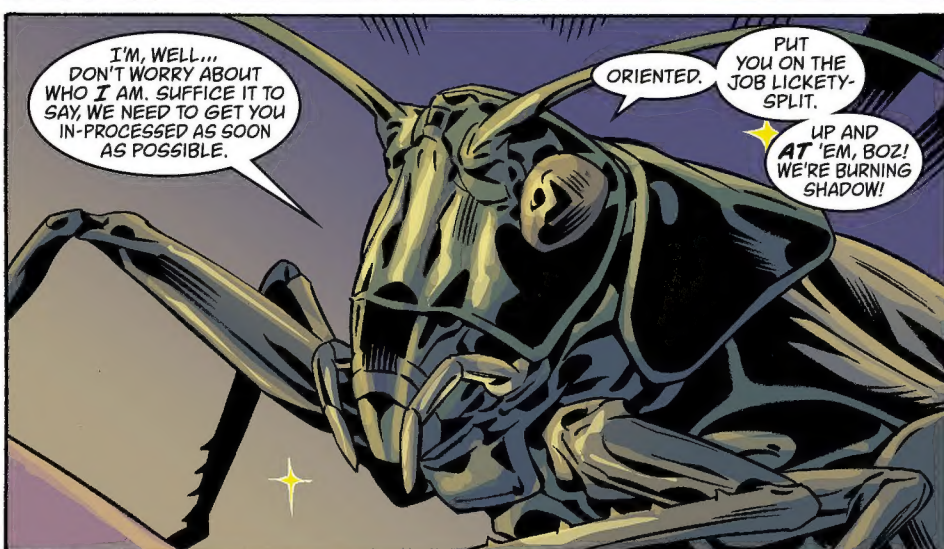
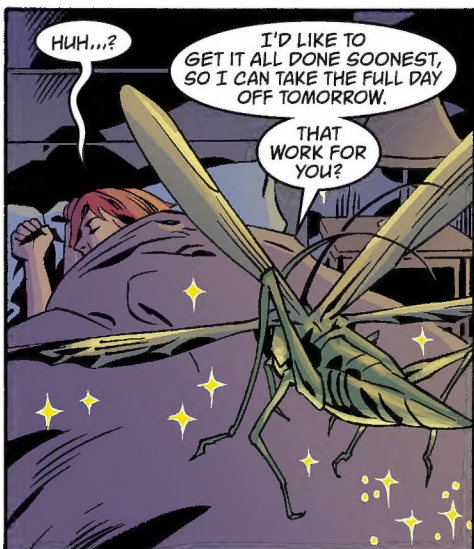
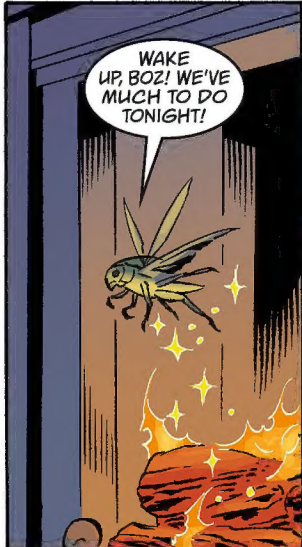
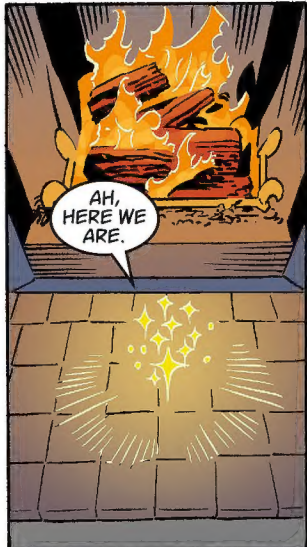


# Chapter Two - The Cricket on the Hearth

The next night...









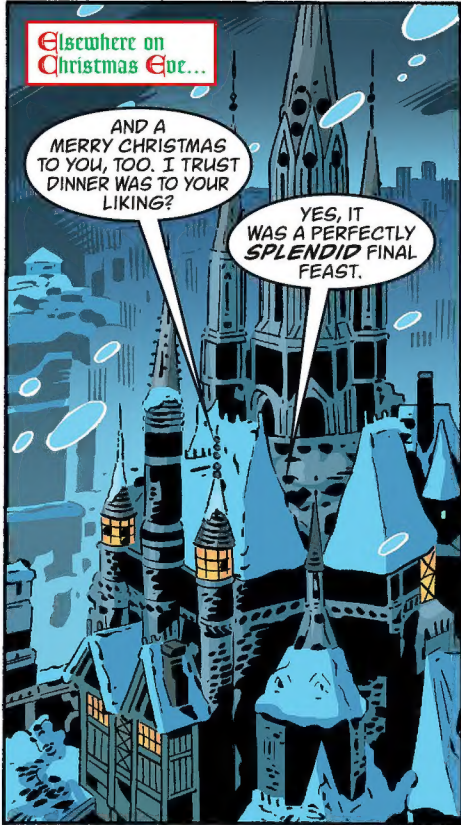




Elsewhere on Christmas Eve...

AND A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU, TOO. I TRUST DINNER WAS TO YOUR LIKING?

YES, IT WAS A PERFECTLY **SPLENDID** FINAL FEAST.



I'LL MISS THE GOOD FOOD AND OTHER COMFORTS.

ME TOO.



STILL, AS NEEDS MUST, WHEN THE DEVIL DRIVES.

THESE COMFORTS WOULD BE HARD TO **EXPLAIN** WHEN THE OTHERS ARRIVE.



TRUE ENOUGH.

BUT I WISH THEY'D GET ON WITH IT. WHAT'S **TAKING** THEM SO LONG?







I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THEIR RECENT TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS HAD MADE THEM TIMID.

THEIR CAUTION IS TO OUR BENEFIT, THOUGH. WE'VE OCCASION TO CELEBRATE A *PROPER* CHRISTMAS BEFORE THEY DESCEND ON US.



HERE, LEIGH.

I KNOW WE AGREED NOT TO EXCHANGE GIFTS, BUT I COULDN'T *RESIST*.



FOR ME?  
WHAT IS--OH!  
WERIAN, YOU *DARLING!*



IT'S PERFECT!  
EXACTLY WHAT I WANT AND WHAT I NEED.

B

B



WHAT THE HELL--?!

HERE'S YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT, BOZ.

I'LL BE BACK TO FETCH YOU FOR RENDEZVOUS NUMERO *DOS* WHEN IT'S TIME.

HO!

THERE YOU ARE, YOUNG LADY.

ABOUT TIME.

I WORRIED YOU WERE GOING TO MISS THE BEST PART OF THE EVENING.





YOU!  
YOU'RE  
ONE OF HOPE'S  
AGENTS?

DOES THE  
POPE DUKE IN THE  
WOODS?



I'M  
THE PALADIN  
REPRESENTING  
OUR HOPE FOR  
JUSTICE.

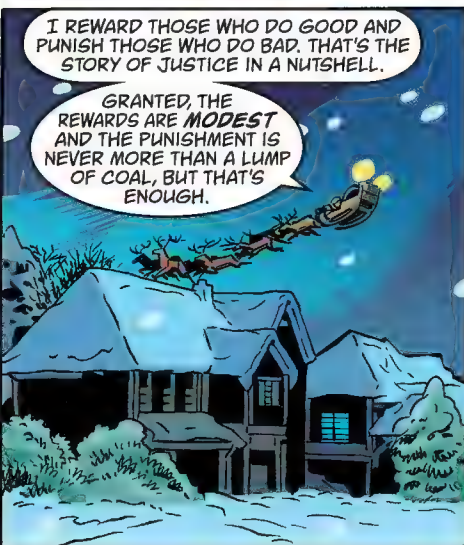


JUSTICE?  
YOU?

YOU  
FIND MY CLAIM  
DUBIOUS?



WELL, IT'S JUST  
THAT--I MEAN, YOU'RE  
GREAT AND ALL, BUT  
JUSTICE IS A BIG DEAL.  
IT'S HUGE. BUT YOU  
DELIVER GIFTS ON  
CHRISTMAS.



I REWARD THOSE WHO DO GOOD AND  
PUNISH THOSE WHO DO BAD. THAT'S THE  
STORY OF JUSTICE IN A NUTSHELL.

GRANTED, THE  
REWARDS ARE *MODEST*  
AND THE PUNISHMENT IS  
NEVER MORE THAN A LUMP  
OF COAL, BUT THAT'S  
ENOUGH.

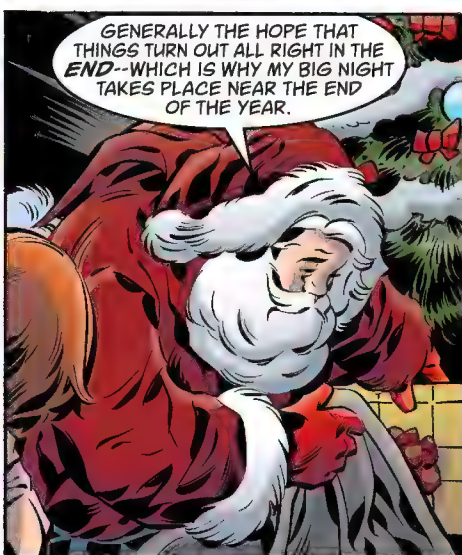


IT'S SYMBOLIC.

JUST ENOUGH  
TO PRIME THE SPIRITUAL  
PUMP, SO TO SPEAK.

WANT TO  
HAND ME MY  
BAG?









I COULDN'T HELP NOTICING THE OLD MAN BROUGHT ALONG SOME HOT REDHEAD TOOTSIE ON HIS ROUTE TONIGHT.

SO THAT'S NEW.

MIDLIFE CRISIS?



SOME MEN GET SPORTS CARS. SOME QUIT THEIR JOBS. OTHERS SNAG A YOUNG MISTRESS.

OR SO I HEAR.



MAKES SENSE. HE CAN'T CHANGE JOBS, AND THERE'S NOWHERE TO DRIVE A SPORTS CAR AT THE NORTH POLE. A LITTLE HOT *DISH* OF SOMETHING ON THE SIDE IS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT.



SO WHAT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY HERE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

ARE WE OBLIGED TO RAT HIM OUT TO THE OLD LADY, OR DO WE KEEP MUM?



I SEE THE DILEMMA. SURE, THEY BOTH REFER TO US AS PART OF THE FAMILY, BUT WE WORK FOR HIM.

I SAY WE TUCK THE INFORMATION AWAY IN OUR POCKET, IN CASE WE NEED TO *USE* IT SOMEDAY. NEVER HURTS TO HAVE SOMETHING ON THE BOSS.





LOOK!  
COOKIES!

HELP  
YOURSELF. MRS.  
KUPPERMAN IS A  
GREAT COOK.



OKAY, SO  
YOU'RE ONE OF  
THE BOSS LADY'S  
THREE REMAINING  
AGENTS.

I GUESS I  
GET THAT.



BUT I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND WHY  
I NEEDED TO  
KNOW.

WHAT AM  
I *DOING*  
HERE?

SIMPLE  
ENOUGH, I  
SUPPOSE.



SOONER OR  
LATER YOU'RE GOING  
TO HAVE TO FIGURE OUT  
WHAT SORT OF HOPE  
YOU REPRESENT.







WILL YOU EMBODY THE HOPE FOR GOOD HEALTH AND LONG LIFE?

PROSPERITY?

HAPPINESS, OR AT LEAST *SATISFACTION*?



TRUE LOVE?

BITE YOUR TONGUE.

MY LOVE LIFE WAS AND *REMAINS* SO COMPLETELY AROUND-*THE-BEND* FUCKED UP THAT I NEED TO STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM THAT NONSENSE AS POSSIBLE.



SUIT YOURSELF, BUT CHOOSE WISELY, BECAUSE, ONCE YOU PICK A THEME, YOU'RE MORE OR LESS LOCKED INTO IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.



OH, HERE'S YOUR RIDE.

GOOD LUCK FIGURING EVERYTHING OUT.





At that same moment at Wolf Manor...

BITE YOUR TONGUE.

MY LOVE LIFE WAS AND *REMAINS* SO COMPLETELY AROUND-THE-BEND FUCKED UP THAT I NEED TO STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM THAT NONSENSE AS POSSIBLE.

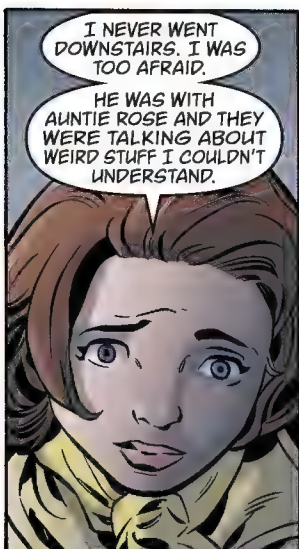
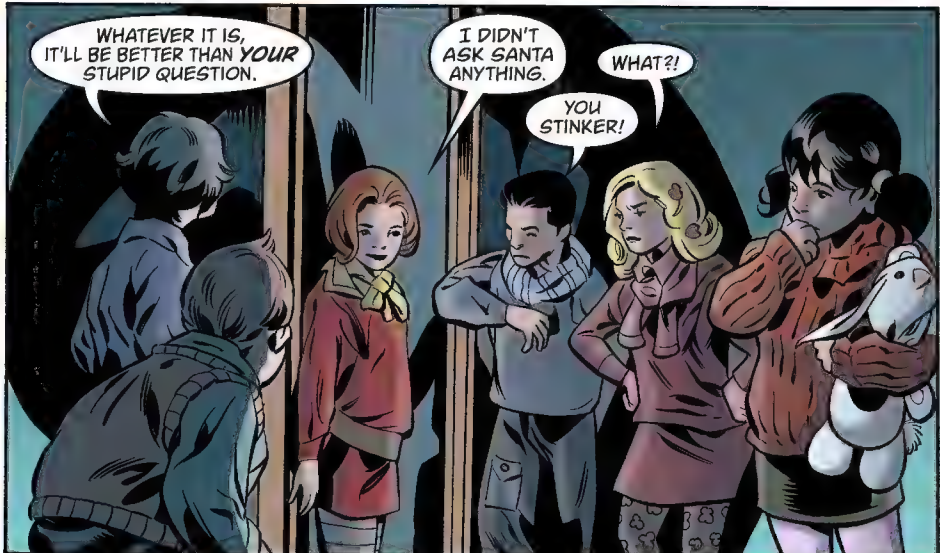
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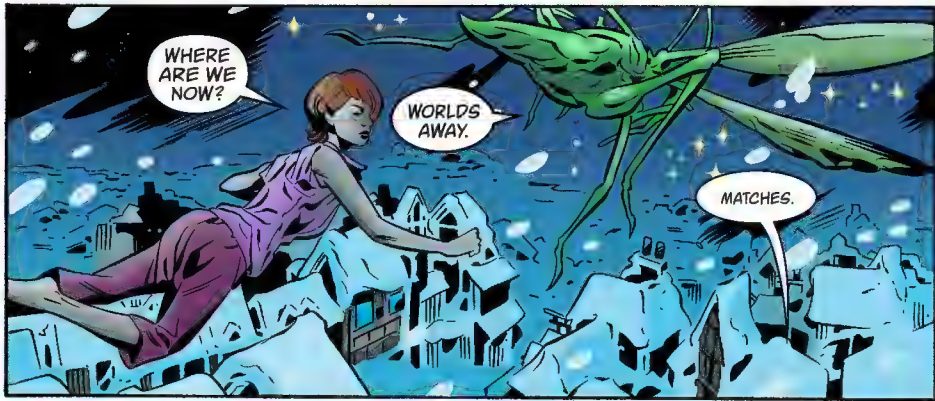




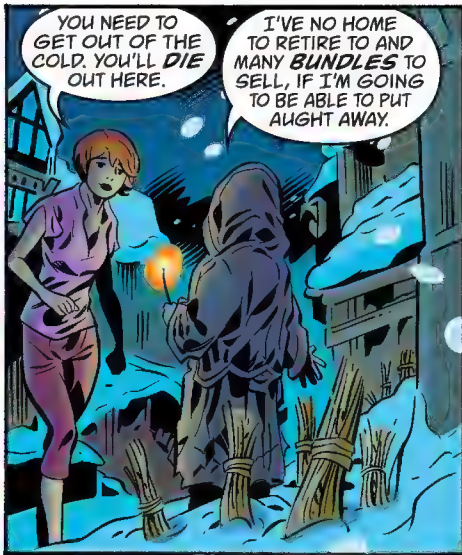




# Chapter Three – The Battle of Life







YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF THE COLD. YOU'LL **DIE** OUT HERE.

I'VE NO HOME TO RETIRE TO AND MANY **BUNDLES** TO SELL, IF I'M GOING TO BE ABLE TO PUT AUGHT AWAY.



A SLEEPING BENCH UNDER A STOUT ROOF COSTS A PENNY A NIGHT.

TOO MUCH.

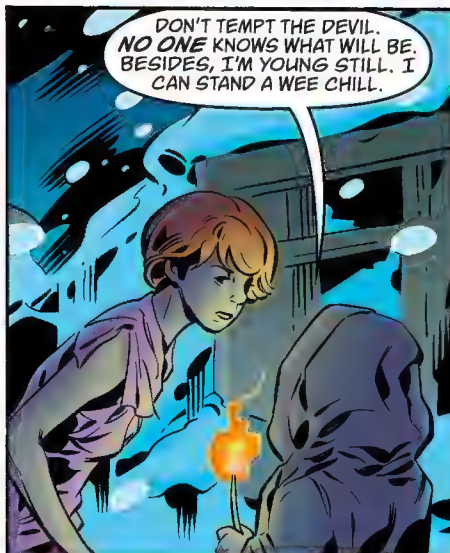
TOO MUCH.



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU'LL ACTUALLY **DIE** OUT HERE!

**TONIGHT,** I THINK!

THAT'S THE WAY YOUR STORY TURNS OUT!



DON'T TEMPT THE DEVIL. **NO ONE** KNOWS WHAT WILL BE. BESIDES, I'M YOUNG STILL. I CAN STAND A WEE CHILL.



PERHAPS WE SHOULD BE ABOUT OUR BUSINESS, SO THAT I DON'T MISS ANY **CUSTOMER** WHO MIGHT HAPPEN BY.



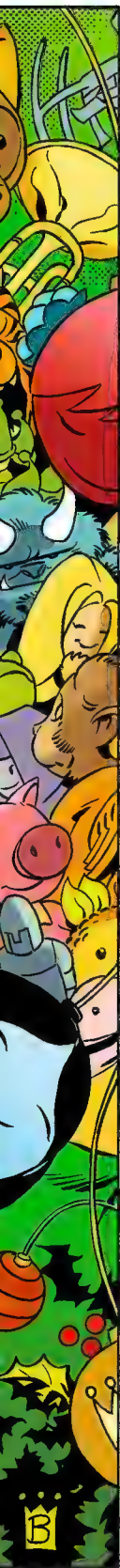
I'M THE CARETAKER OF HOPE DEFERRED.

THOUGH MY LOT MAY NOT BE THE BEST IN LIFE, I INTEND MY CHILDREN TO DO BETTER.









WAS IT ENTIRELY NECESSARY THAT YOU PUT ME THROUGH THAT?

THE GREAT LADY WANTED YOU TO MEET ALL HER TOP PLAYERS TONIGHT, BOZ.



BUT THE MATCH GIRL--SHE'S GOING TO DIE, WITH ALL OF HER HOPES UNFULFILLED.

TONIGHT, ON CHRISTMAS EVE!

IN JUST A FEW HOURS SHE FREEZES TO DEATH, STILL THINKING EVERYTHING WILL TURN OUT ALL RIGHT!



THAT'S USUALLY THE STANDARD DEAL, BOZ.

MOST OF US DIE WITH OUR HOPES UNFULFILLED.

GENERALLY, THE ONLY ONES WHO AVOID IT ARE THOSE WITH NO HOPES IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WELL, THAT SUCKS GIANT RAZOR PISS LEPER COCKS!



THE MOUTH ON YOU.

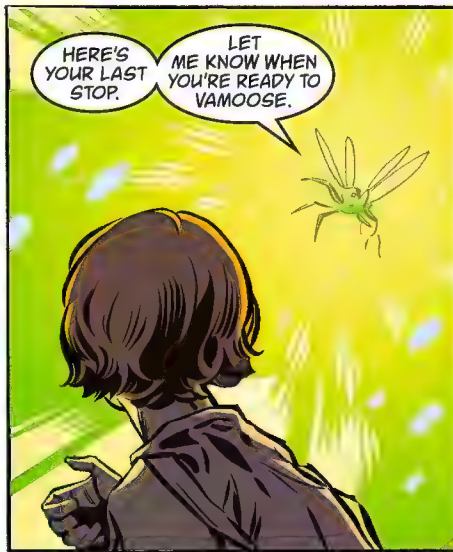
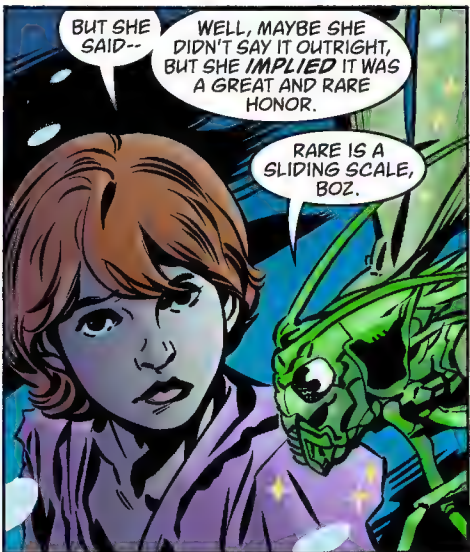
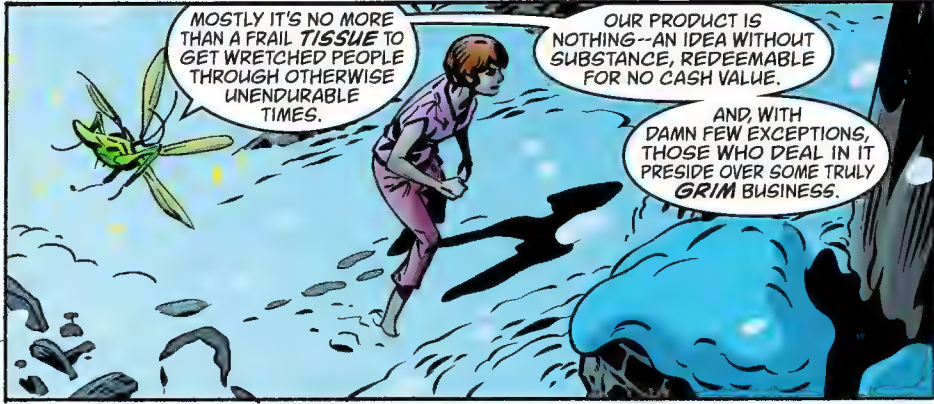
JUST WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE SIGNING UP FOR WHEN YOU AGREED TO BECOME ONE OF HER PALADINS?

HOPES AIN'T NO GUARANTEE, BOZ. NEVER WAS.





# Chapter Four — The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain







LOOK, ANOTHER HAUNTED MAN.

ARE YOU AFTER REVELATIONS, PUNISHMENT FOR YOUR SINS, OR TRYING TO PLEAD YOUR WAY OUT OF SOME DOOM?



LOOK CLOSER, OLD SHADE. HAUNTED SHE MAY BE, BUT THAT'S A WOMAN, OR PERHAPS A GIRL.

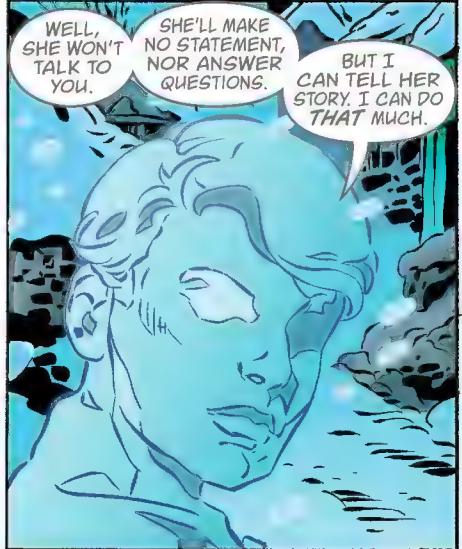
YOUR CONFUSION IS UNDERSTANDABLE, THOUGH. DRESSES LIKE A RAGAMUFFIN BOY, SHE DOES.



COME TO SEE THE SILENT ONE, HAVEN'T YOU?

I CAN TELL. YOU'VE GOT THAT VULNERABLE LOOK ABOUT YOU...

...LIKE A LIVING CREATURE AT THE PRECISE MOMENT HE REALIZES HE'S PART OF THE FOOD CHAIN.



WELL, SHE WON'T TALK TO YOU.

SHE'LL MAKE NO STATEMENT, NOR ANSWER QUESTIONS.

BUT I CAN TELL HER STORY. I CAN DO THAT MUCH.



AFTER ALL, WASN'T I THERE TO SEE IT?

YES, I SURELY WAS, OR ELSE I HEARD IT FROM ANOTHER.



WON'T COST YOU MUCH, NEITHER.

JUST A SINGLE KISS.

A CHASTE KISS ON THE CHEEK. HARDLY NOTHING AT ALL.





OH!

YOUNG TRAVELER, MAY I INTRODUCE YOU TO THIS MOST *AUGUST* SHADE OF BLIGHT AND TERROR?

ON THIS HOLY NIGHT, ALL OF US ARE FREED FROM OUR RESTING PLACES, TO WALK ABOUT AS WE ONCE DID IN LIFE.

BUT NOT HER, FOR SHE CANNOT LIE AMONG US. SHE WANDERS AT THE EDGE OF THE LIVING WORLD, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, NEVER TO KNOW REST.

FOR SHE'S THE *FALSE BRIDE*.

ON THIS ONE NIGHT, I'M ABLE TO TELL HER STORY.

NEVER MIND, SMALL SPIRIT. SCURRY OFF.

I'LL TELL MY OWN TALE TO THIS ONE.







SHE SPOKE!

SO WE'RE TO BE COLLEAGUES, YOU AND I.

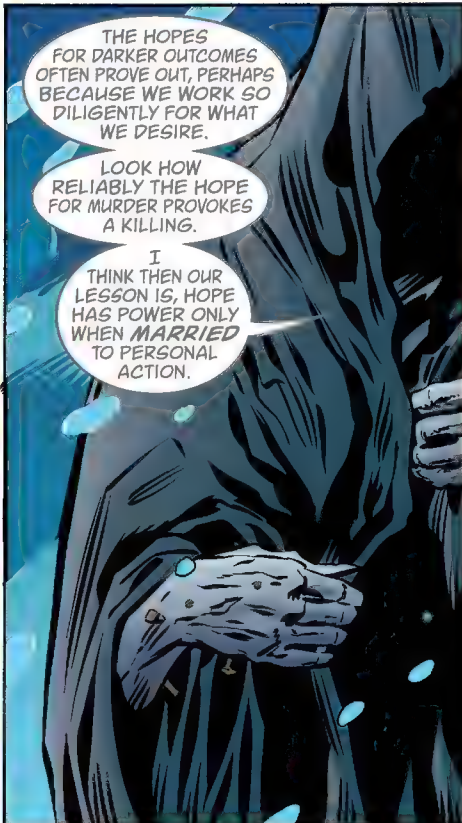
HMMMMM.



I AM THE AVATAR FOR THE HOPE OF REVENGE.

NOT BECAUSE I OBTAINED IT--THOUGH I ADMIT I TRIED--BUT IN DUE RECOGNITION OF THE TERRIBLE REVENGE THAT WAS DONE TO ME.

YOUR CHITTING GUIDE THROUGH THE NIGHT SPOKE FALSELY. NOT ALL HOPES DIE UNREALIZED.



THE HOPES FOR DARKER OUTCOMES OFTEN PROVE OUT, PERHAPS BECAUSE WE WORK SO DILIGENTLY FOR WHAT WE DESIRE.

LOOK HOW RELIABLY THE HOPE FOR MURDER PROVOKES A KILLING.

I THINK THEN OUR LESSON IS, HOPE HAS POWER ONLY WHEN MARRIED TO PERSONAL ACTION.

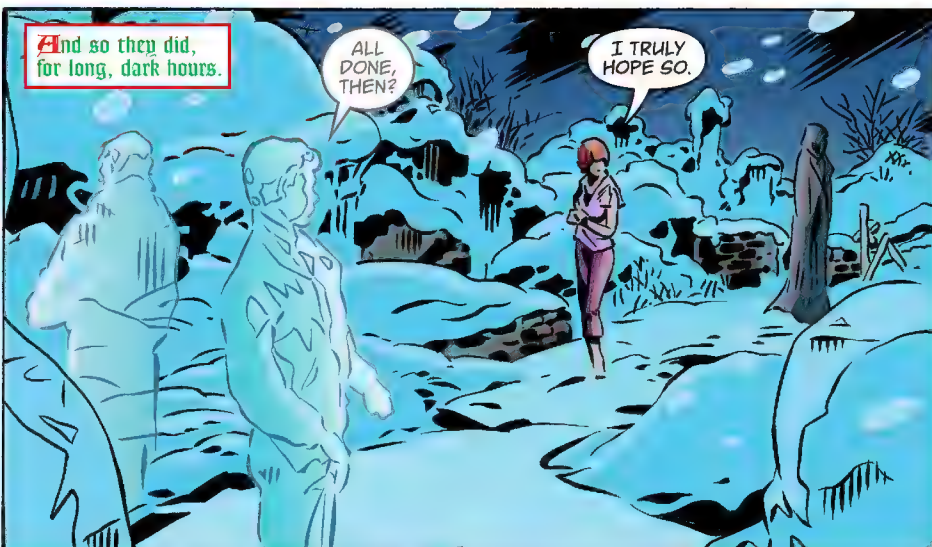


THAT'S HOW I BECAME THE BRIDE TO REVENGE.

ALL THOSE GOOD MEN AND WOMEN, WITH RIGHT AND JUSTICE TO BE DONE, HAD THEIR REVENGE ON ME.

FOR MY CRIMES, THEY LOCKED ME IN A BARREL, POUNDED IRON SPIKES THROUGH IT AND THEN SENT ME TUMBLING DOWN THE COBBLES TO MY DEATH.









I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.

BUT THERE'S ONE BIT OF BUSINESS YET. WE MADE A BARGAIN.

YOU OWE ME A KISS.



OH, YEAH.

FINE. HERE.



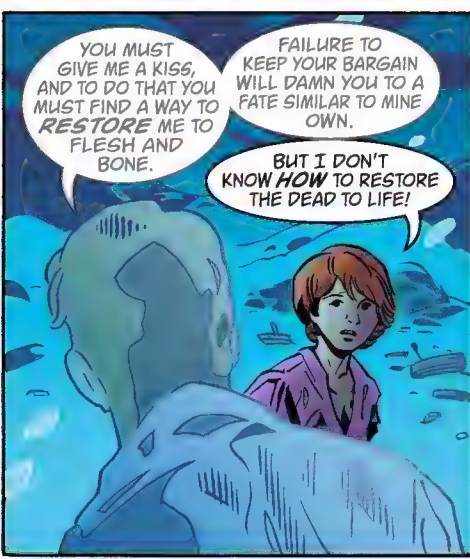
HMMM. THAT DIDN'T EXACTLY WORK.

NO, YOU CAN'T KISS SOMEONE WHO ISN'T THERE. ONLY TRUE **SUBSTANCE** CAN BE KISSED, SO THAT'S WHAT YOU OWE ME.



THE HELL I DO! I NEVER MEANT--!

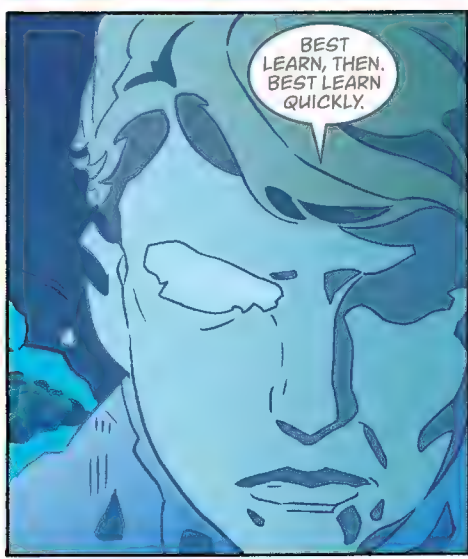
WHAT YOU MEANT IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE-- ONLY WHAT YOU PLEDGED.



YOU MUST GIVE ME A KISS, AND TO DO THAT YOU MUST FIND A WAY TO **RESTORE** ME TO FLESH AND BONE.

FAILURE TO KEEP YOUR BARGAIN WILL DAMN YOU TO A FATE SIMILAR TO MINE OWN.

BUT I DON'T KNOW **HOW** TO RESTORE THE DEAD TO LIFE!



BEST LEARN, THEN. BEST LEARN QUICKLY.



# Chapter Five - A Christmas Carol





At about that same time...

I GOT A ROCK.

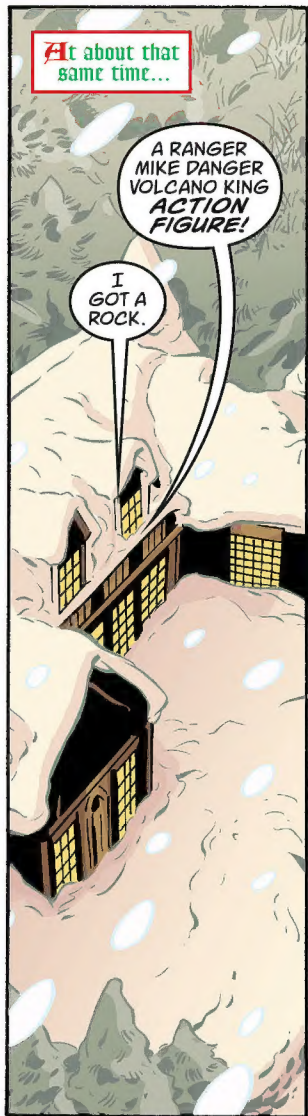
A RANGER MIKE DANGER VOLCANO KING ACTION FIGURE!

OH, I SEE. IT GOES WITH MY NEW ROCK-POLISHING KIT!

MOMMY AND DADDY ARE BEING FUNNY AGAIN.

A BLOWGUN? WICKED COOL!

THIS IS THE SECOND BEST CHRISTMAS EVER!



A BOAT?

SOMEONE GAVE ME A TOY BOAT?

WHY WOULD ANYONE THINK THIS IS WHAT I WANT?



Ending this time on a wee mystery, we'd like to wish you and yours a very merry Christmas, full of good cheer and entirely devoid of unwanted toy boats.



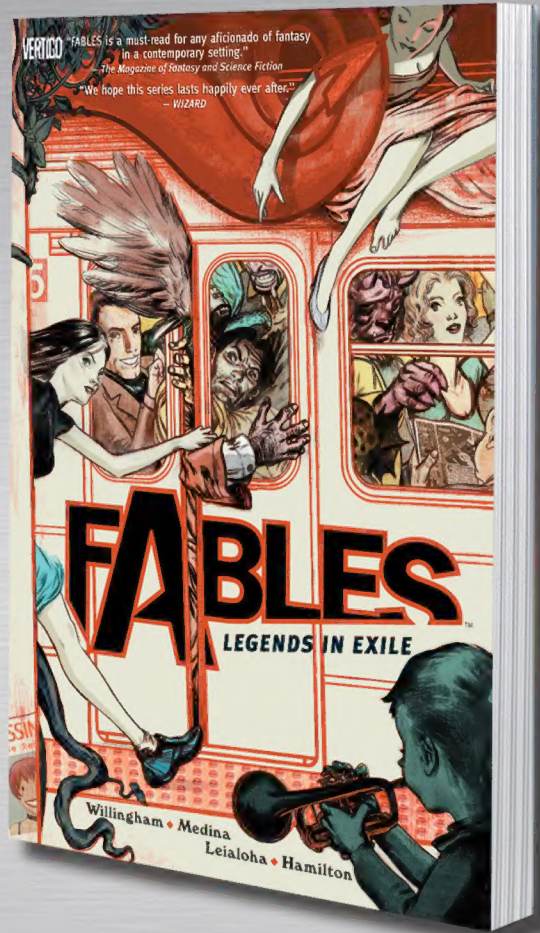
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# BILL WILLINGHAM

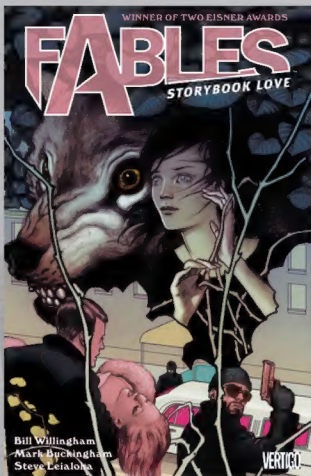
*"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York."*  
– THE WASHINGTON POST



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- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
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- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
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- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



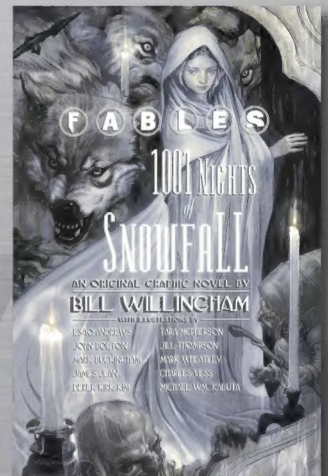
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NATHAN